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Assessing Transformational Leadership
Components as Drivers in Learning
Organisations

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Doctor of Philosophy
in
Management

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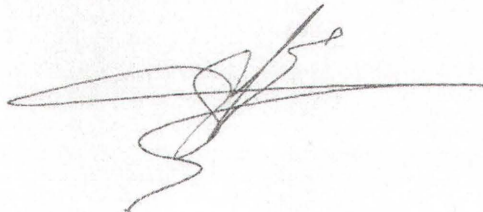
February 2012

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

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Abstract

Transformational leadership is highly recognised for bringing change to organisations and for its significant positive effects on employee satisfaction and development, developing self-management teams and organisational effectiveness, and contributing to innovation and creativity. Yet there has been relatively little research on how transformational leadership actually works. It has been well established that a continuously evolving organisation is one that can truly learn. However, little is known about the role of knowledge and learning in promoting change. Consequently, one of the major management challenges is to understand management's role in organisational change and business success.

It has been found that the reaction of learning organisations in response to external environment not only positively impacts the performance of the organisation but also enhances job satisfaction and performance among employees. Despite the critical importance of transformational leaders in leading and developing organisations and the significance of transforming organisations into learning organisations, the area of research that covers the role of leaders in developing an organisation that can truly learn (learning organisation) has not been covered to a significant degree.

This research study investigates the effect of the transformational leadership components developed by Bass (1990, 1985) on the disciplines of Learning Organisations developed by Senge (1990). It investigates proposals for transformational leadership to better lead Learning Organisations. To this end, 37 semi-structured and unstructured interviews were conducted in five learning organisations in Jordan. This research is qualitative in nature and utilises an interpretative approach in studying and analysing the five cases studied.

In general, research findings confirmed the few previous findings indicating that transformational leadership has a significant positive effect on Learning Organisations. However, this research investigates the specific effect of each of the components of transformational leadership on the five disciplines of Learning Organisations. Research findings suggest that Idealised Influence has a positive impact on the development of Shared Vision, Intellectual Stimulation has a positive impact on the development of the Mental Model, and Individualised Consideration has a positive effect on developing Personal Mastery. Additionally, findings suggest two points that ought to be considered by transformational leadership to effectively lead Learning Organisations: 1) transformational leadership should be a culture; and 2) transformational leadership should be governed by integrity and ethics. The research also identifies the effect of some variables such as size, age, field of work and gender composition on the findings of this research.

The research also explores the implications of its findings on leaders in organizational life and makes recommendations for future studies. Findings are to be limited to Jordan. However, the finding suggesting that transformational leadership should be governed by integrity and ethics can be applied to a much wider setting.

Key Words:

Learning Organisation, Shared Vision, Mental Models, System Thinking, Team Learning, Personal Mastery, Transformational Leadership, Idealised Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, Individualised Consideration, Organisational Culture, Ethics and Integrity in Organisations.